

S-E-C-R-E-T

Minutes of the First Meeting
of the
Support Development Panel

1. The First meeting of the Support Development Panel convened at 0945 hours on 22 December 1964 in Room 7D34. Those present were:

Chairman

Member

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Acting Executive Secretary

2. The meeting was opened by the Chairman who reviewed the series of events that lead to the creation of the Support Development Panel. He then noted several areas of projected panel activity and described the status of present participants in the Support Officers Development Program.

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3. Colonel White and [REDACTED] then joined the meeting. Colonel White reviewed for the Panel some of his thoughts in regard to its mission and related the manner in which his thinking had developed in connection with this mission. He referred to his experience in the [REDACTED] where by bringing in well-screened junior people and furnishing them with a wide variety of experience, a cadre in depth of exceptionally able people resulted. He noted that in the Support Career Services there are some fine people, but that by and large planning for the long range has been largely haphazard with the result that in Support we are not really keeping pace in terms of the quality of the people we attract. Further, we are not giving those that we do attract as varied an experience as they deserve. He also pointed out that because of lack of really good intake we have been filling in with many people who have been performing in administrative capacities, but who are really "not quite qualified." He cited in this regard the fact that many of our people at the journeyman level lack college degrees and other qualifications that many feel are so important.

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Colonel White then noted that although in the development of first-rate talent it is desirable that people have the opportunity for a wide variety of experience, realistically it is impossible to rotate the great majority of our people among the several Support components. Not only are the DD/S offices relatively parochial in this regard, but the job assigned the offices has to be done, usually by people who have been in a functional specialty for some time. To achieve the developmental goal without disrupting the execution of the missions of the components concerned, individuals identified as having potential should be rotated among several positions early in their careers and should be handled centrally. Up to six years and perhaps more might be devoted to grooming people for eventual assignment in the Support components. However, the program should be flexible enough to accommodate those who identify the specific area of activity in which they wish to specialize short of this time. The six-year period in the majority of instances would be devoted largely to a series of assignments in which the individual would be expected to pull his own weight even though he is not quite as effective as one who has concentrated in a functional area. He should be assigned for periods of one to two years so that he will gain a real insight into the operations of the host component. Identification of this type of assignment, Colonel White pointed out, will be a challenge to the Panel members since it would not profit any of these junior people to be assigned to a relatively menial job in a Support office where the function to be performed would be limited in scope. Ideally everyone, especially those with aspiration to become general Administrative Officers, should have experience in Logistics, Personnel and Finance. One of the best ways to acquire this experience is to serve as Chief of Support at a small field station. In this connection, Colonel White described the record of the relatively few JOT's now in the Support Service and stated that they are far superior to those who have moved in to do the job in the past in the absence of qualified Support personnel.

Colonel White concluded that he had high hopes for the Support Officers Development Program and that much responsibility rests with the Panel to ensure its success. He warned that should it not succeed, members of the Support Service might well become second class citizens. He assured the Panel that he would personally review each action it took and that he would be most willing to step in at any point to assist the Panel or any of its members in carrying out the responsibilities envisaged for it and for them. Colonel White then left the meeting.

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4. [REDACTED] then made a few remarks to the Panel, addressing himself primarily to the responsibilities that the Panel would have for assessing the abilities of the people whom it would be developing. He also pointed out that it was the Panel's place to ensure that these people realized that their success would depend on what they put into their careers; that this program was not an easy way to the senior levels. Some have taken this view of the program and [REDACTED] said that the Panel could expect requests for participation from people who either have candidates they wish to offer or who are themselves candidates.

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5. The meeting was then closed by [REDACTED] who asked that the members reflect on Colonel White's and [REDACTED] remarks. He solicited suggestions that any members might have prior to the next meeting. He also stated that the next meeting would be called in early January and that a formal agenda would be circulated outlining specific areas of Panel consideration.

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[REDACTED]
Acting Executive Secretary
Support Development Panel

APPROVED:

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[REDACTED]

L. K. White
Deputy Director
for Support

8 Jan 65

Date

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